

PRESS RELEASE

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Blandford Receives Fourth Phase of Federal Funding for **Water System Improvements**

Blandford, MA – USDA Rural Development State Director David Tuttle and State Representative Smitty Pignatelli joined the Blandford Board of Water Commissioners and Blandford Selectmen Chair, Chet Broughton in rolling up their sleeves and plunging shovels into the ground today at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the towns' new water treatment facility.

Along with a shovel, USDA Rural Development State Director Tuttle brought a check made out to the Town of Blandford for \$1.6 million. The federal loan and grant funds were awarded to the town earlier this month for the construction of an access road to a dam at the water supply, to make improvements to the dam and, to construct the new water treatment plant.

Blandford's water improvement project began back in April, 2002 when over \$2 million in federal loan and grant funds were awarded to the town in order to repair its water distribution system. The federal assistance came after the town was unexpectedly rattled by two small tremors in the summer of 2000. The 2002 Farm Bill provided a second phase of loan and grant funds for Blandford's water project totaling over \$2.3 million. Those federal dollars were used for the continued upgrading of some portions of the distribution system and for the pre-construction development of the new water treatment facility. In April 2004, Blandford again received over \$2 million from USDA Rural Development to replace approximately five miles of its water distribution system and to begin construction on the water treatment plant.

"The Blandford Board of Selectmen and the Board of Water Commissioners should be recognized for their dedication and efforts to provide a safe and reliable drinking water supply for the town," said senior project manager, Dave Lenart of Tighe and Bond, the engineering firm contracted to assist Blandford with the projects' planning and design. "When the tremors in 2000 caused the town's aging water system infrastructure to fail, disrupting the supply of water to the users, the Board of Selectmen and Board of Water Commissioners recognized the need to begin immediate planning for long term water system improvements," said Lenart.

As a venture capital entity within the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure.

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